InspiringEducation

A DIALOGUE WITH ALBERTANS

The Steering Committee Report to the
Honourable Dave Hancock,
Minister of Education
Government of Alberta
April 2010

Alberta

Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

"We need to prepare kids for their future not our past"

Dr. Richard Moniuszko, Deputy Superintendent, Fairview County Public Schools, Virginia as quoted by Daniel Pink on October 18, 2009 in his presentation at the Inspiring Education Provincial Forum.

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Letter of Transmittal

From Steering Committee Co-chairs
to the Honourable Dave Hancock, Minister of Education

Dear Minister Hancock:

On behalf of the *Inspiring Education* Steering Committee, we are pleased to submit our report outlining a long-term vision for Alberta's education system.

In presenting this report, we must acknowledge the support of the *Inspiring Education* Working Committee. They explored a variety of policy and governance options for our consideration. We must also thank the *Inspiring Education* Project Team for their expertise and the countless hours they devoted to this project.

Above all, we must thank the thousands of Albertans who took the time to express their hopes, dreams and aspirations for our children's education. This report presents their bold and courageous thinking with regard to positioning Alberta's education system for success in 2030.

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this exciting and important project!

Jeff Johnson
MLA Athabasca- Redwater
Parliamentary Assistant
to Treasury Board

Brent McDonough
Teacher
Edmonton Catholic Schools

What is ahead for tomorrow's learner?

Currently in development, a device called the 'SixthSense'[1] gives users information about any object in their immediate surroundings. It projects out information normally found on a computer, in effect making the world a computer.

The SixthSense device is a wearable pendant that combines a mirror, a pocket projector, and a camera. Both the projector and the camera are connected to a cell phone in the user's pocket. The device projects visual information on surfaces, walls and physical objects so that they become interfaces.

With this device, for example, a newspaper can display live video news. An airline boarding pass can be placed in front of the device and inform the traveller about the current status of his or her flight. The gesture of drawing a circle on the user's wrist projects a functional analog watch.

Imagine the possibilities for learners!

Community Conversations Summary, Spring 2009[1]

1 Pranav Mistry, www.pranavmistry.com

Executive Summary

We have an excellent education system today where people come from all over the world to take a look at what we're doing now, but we cannot rest on our laurels. We need to build the education system for tomorrow.

Education Minister Dave Hancock

The year 2030 seems barely visible on the horizon. However, a child born in Alberta this year will be of age in 2030. The birthrights of this child are many, including access to a publicly funded education system widely acknowledged as among the best in the world. But will it be enough? Will the child born this year have the skills necessary to both continue the Alberta legacy and strengthen it?

Today's generation has seen the rise of knowledge as a key resource of the world's economy. In the future, Alberta's economy will be even more knowledge-based, diverse and grounded in value-added industries. As never before, the next generation will need to be innovative, creative, and skilled in managing knowledge as a resource. It will experience a world increasingly interdependent and competitive—factors that will add complexity to decisions about many issues, including the use of natural resources.

The child born this year will be a member of a population both older and more diverse than our population today. For every two people retiring in the next decade, there will be less than one person to take those jobs. At the same time, current growth rates will add 80,000 people to the province every year, a number equivalent to the population of Lethbridge in 2007. The child born this year will have more interactions with differing cultures, languages and religions than ever before.

In all of this, the pace of change will be relentless and greater than we have ever experienced.

The (learning) material that we deal with needs to be global and expanded in order to create global learners and global citizens. We need to have a multicultural focus.

Community Council of St. Madeleine Hall

How do we ensure the child born this year can adapt to the many changes ahead? As importantly, how do we help children discover and pursue their passions? How do we help them make successful transitions to adulthood? And how do we help them become lifelong learners who contribute to healthy, inclusive communities and thriving economies?

In 2008, Premier Ed Stelmach mandated Education Minister Dave Hancock to lead an initiative that would create a long-term vision for education in Alberta. Minister Hancock struck a 22-member Steering Committee, supported by a stakeholder and cross-government Working Committee, to achieve three aims:

- heighten appreciation of the importance of education in the life of Albertans and its increasing contribution to a prosperous society and economy,
- develop a clear understanding of what it will mean to be a successfully educated Albertan in twenty years, and
- create the basis for a broad policy framework describing the overall direction, principles, and long-term goals for education in Alberta (otherwise described as a framework for policy development).

A variety of processes were used to involve the public, including personal conversations, regional community conversations, local conversations, a provincial forum, and ongoing online conversations/discussion/dialogue. The input of thousands of Albertans is the foundation for this document. The ideas and values contained within apply to every learner, including those who are urban, rural, Aboriginal, disabled, gifted, or of a minority culture.

Inspiring Education presents a vision for education to 2030. It sets high-level direction, but it does not lay out the process for implementation.

The vision of *Inspiring Education* is transformational. Some may claim the transformation to achieve this vision is underway. Indeed, some of what is outlined in this report is already happening in pockets throughout the province. For example, as described later in this report, Caslan School integrates Métis heritage and fine arts into the curriculum. This makes the curriculum richer and more relevant to its students. However, discussions with thousands of Albertans confirmed that innovations like this are in the minority. To truly transform education, the education system must empower innovation throughout the province.

The Vision

Albertans articulated their vision for education through specific outcomes which have been summarized as "the Three E's" of education for the 21st Century. Albertans told us the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) system should strive to instil the following qualities and abilities in our youth:

- **Engaged Thinker**: who thinks critically and makes discoveries; who uses technology to learn, innovate, communicate, and discover; who works with multiple perspectives and disciplines to identify problems and find the best solutions; who communicates

these ideas to others; and who, as a life-long learner, adapts to change with an attitude of optimism and hope for the future.

- **Ethical Citizen:** who builds relationships based on humility, fairness and open-mindedness; who demonstrates respect, empathy and compassion; and who through teamwork, collaboration and communication contributes fully to the community and the world.
- **Entrepreneurial Spirit:** who creates opportunities and achieves goals through hard work, perseverance and discipline; who strives for excellence and earns success; who explores ideas and challenges the status quo; who is competitive, adaptable and resilient; and who has the confidence to take risks and make bold decisions in the face of adversity.

When I think of learning in 20 years, I hope that education will have responded to children in a whole way including their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being as well as their academic needs.

Community Conversation, Edmonton

Underlying the Three E's are six core values. These values must be embraced by all who are part of the learning community. They should be expressed in every decision related to curriculum, teaching, assessment, policy and governance. They are:

- opportunity
- fairness
- citizenship
- choice
- diversity
- excellence

How must Alberta's education system shift to make this vision possible?

First, our concept of education should expand beyond the school and make the community a true partner. The community can be a source of leadership, teaching, and support through the participation of experts, mentors, and elders. Leadership can be found in a variety of organizations including the business community, post-secondary institutions, not-for-profit organizations, and cultural groups.

Secondly, to achieve their full potential as expressed in the vision children must be the centre of *all* decisions related to learning and the overall education system. Children and youth of all ages should be supported as individuals—emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually[3]. Their personal interests, curiosities, and strengths should be taken into account. Activities that encourage play, creativity and imagination should become the norm. Curriculum should be relevant and available in a variety of forms. It must be accessible; in-person or virtually, collaboratively or independently, and at one's own pace.

Thirdly, the educated Albertan of 2030 should develop and demonstrate the attitudes, skills, knowledge, and values required for

life-long learning. A focus on competencies would move education to a process of inquiry and discovery—not just the dissemination of information and recall of facts. Learners would still study subjects like language arts and mathematics. But rather than study a large number of subjects, each independent of the other, learners would focus more deeply on a curriculum that allows for more interdisciplinary learning, combining the arts and other academic streams.

To measure core competencies, assessment should also change. In community conversations, Albertans stressed the need for diverse approaches to evaluate learner competency, including the use of qualitative measures.

In a system that is more learner-centred and competency-based, Albertans see the role of the teacher changing from that of a knowledge authority to an architect of learning—one who plans, designs and oversees learning activities. The teacher would consider the interests, passions, talents and natural curiosities of the learner. He or she would inspire, motivate and plant the seeds for life-long learning.

Other than parents and families, Albertans see the teacher as the single most important contributor to learner success. They were clear that teachers must achieve excellence if they are to inspire the same level of achievement in learners. How we prepare teachers and how we assure teaching excellence would need to change to align with the shifts in policy.

Learners in particular told us that teachers need to be innovative, passionate and positive about teaching. These qualities could be nurtured through a variety of policies and practices, including a less restrictive curriculum, meaningful professional development, and structures that allow regular exchange of ideas and best practices.

Finally, technology should play a broader role in the classroom. In addition to being used as a tool to impart information, ultimately, its power should be harnessed in support of learners' innovation and discovery. It should be seamlessly integrated into the learning environment.

In order to achieve these shifts, the following principles should guide education in Alberta:

- learner-centred
- shared responsibility and accountability for results
- engaged communities
- inclusive, equitable access
- responsive, flexible approach
- sustainable and efficient use of resources
- innovation to promote and strive for excellence

Education must develop core competencies, the ability to:

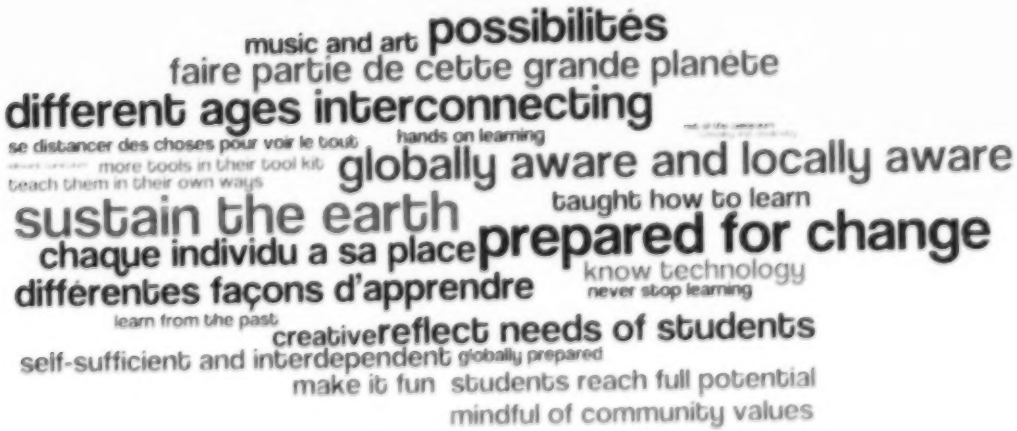
- know how to learn
- think critically
- identify and solve problems
- manage information
- innovate
- create opportunities
- apply multiple literacies
- communicate well and cooperate with others
- demonstrate global and cultural understanding
- identify and apply career and life skills

Through conversations with Albertans, it became clear to the Steering Committee that governance should also change to align with the shifts in policy. The principles listed above provide a foundation for decision-making. In addition, future governance should ensure:

- A broad representation of stakeholders to participate in governance and decision-making. Governors could be elected, appointed, or recruited from the community.
- Flexibility and discretion at the local level should be the norm. Governance should be less top-down, more consensual and based on principles.
- Governors should strive for excellence and be supported with the training to achieve it.
- Accountabilities for learning excellence should be clear; accountability processes should reflect the appropriate degree of complexity and formality required by learners, educators, leaders, funders, and communities.
- Where institutions and agencies share a common purpose regarding the welfare of children, the Government of Alberta should lead by aligning the mandates of government ministries and promoting integrated programs and services.

The content of this report reflects the views of thousands of Albertans and is forwarded to Minister Hancock for his review. Should the Government of Alberta adopt the vision outlined in this report, it will need to determine immediate priorities and timelines for implementation. It will also need to collaborate with stakeholders to:

- create new policy frameworks and governance structures
- implement a competency-based system
- review assessment procedures to align with a competency-based system
- develop a process of continuous evaluation to ensure the system is achieving the desired outcomes



From the Grande Prairie Community Conversation, May 6, 2009

Imagine the Alberta classroom of 2030

A new girl has joined the class. She comes from the African nation Zimbabwe, and her name is Chipo. While one- half of the children were born in other countries, no one comes from Zimbabwe.

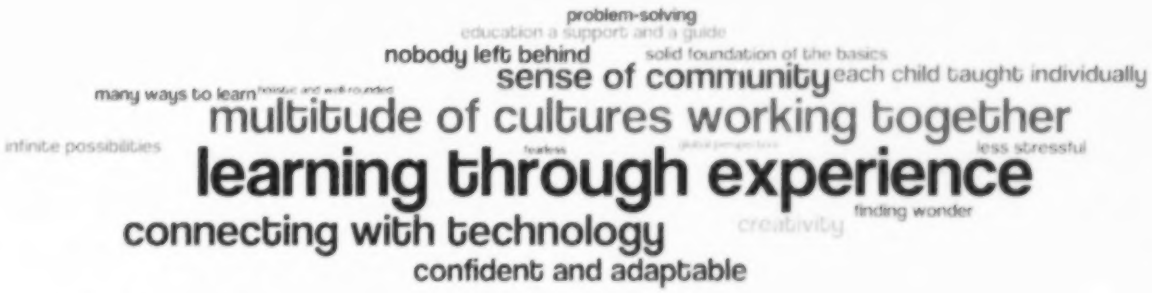
The children have many questions. What is the town like that Chipo comes from? What sports do they play? What languages do they speak? Chipo has a question too: How will I fit in?

By tapping her bracelet, Chipo connects to a digital network and shows the class the life she knows. She projects an image of the village centre onto the wall of the classroom. With a flick of her finger, she reaches her friend Gamba who, in real time, takes the class on a tour of Chipo's former neighbourhood. Now the projection shows brick houses with metal roofs and children playing soccer. Chipo explains that many of the homes are owned in partnership with relatives.

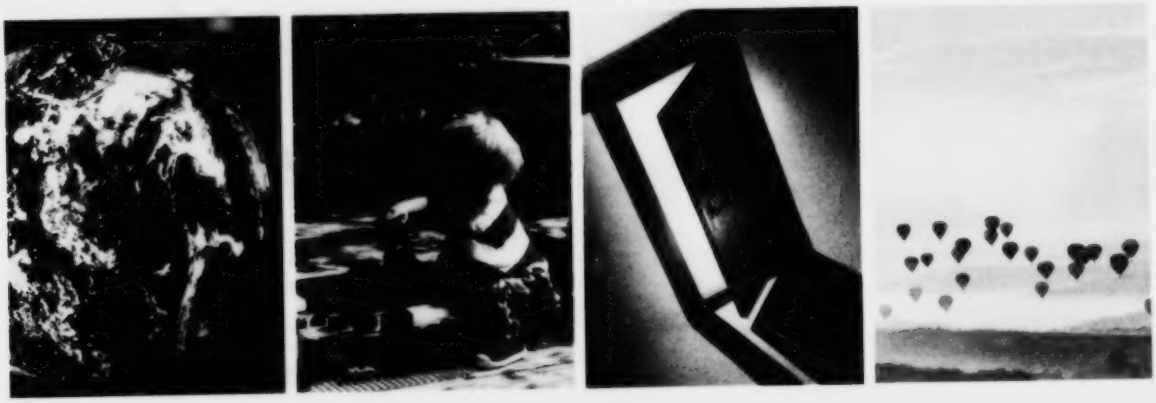
Chipo's classmates come upon a gathering of local musicians. The music is compelling—the extra pulse the children hear makes some of them dance around the classroom. But what interests them the most are the instruments, particularly one that is a rectangular block with metal prongs. Chipo says that the instrument is a mbira, but some call it a thumb piano.

The mbira player performs a couple of simple tunes that the children record so they can learn to reproduce them on the keyboards within their notebooks. In the classroom, using a computer design program, a group of children start to build their own mbira. The program refines their rough sketches, making suggestions for improvement. Connecting with the program's massive database, they experiment with different sounds, and create a digital 3-D model for their version of the traditional mbira. This one is more compact and higher in tone.

The mbira player, excited to have an opportunity to practise English and learn about Canada, agrees with Gamba and Chipo to check back with the class the next week to see how they are doing with their new mbira. The class goes on to work with the mbira player to create a performance piece that they share with other classes at the next school assembly.



From the Fort McMurray Community Conversation, May 13, 2009



1. Introduction

The story is imagined, but just barely. The SixthSense device described earlier makes the events of Chipo's day imminent, certainly something we will see well before 2030.

The year 2030 is also closer than we think. A child born in Alberta this year will be of age in 2030. The future is only a generation away.

The birthrights of this child are many, including access to a publicly funded education system that has been cited as the best in Canada.[ii] International tests widely acknowledge Alberta's education system as among the five highest-performing in the world.

Indeed, the rights and responsibilities granted at birth to this child are the rich legacy of those who have come before. They built a province which sparks the admiration of many throughout the world. People currently come to Alberta because of the opportunities to build a better life; to create, live and share in Alberta's success.

But will today's education system be enough to prepare our children for tomorrow? Will the child born this year have the skills necessary to both continue Alberta's legacy and strengthen it?

Most adults today grew up with an industrial model of education[2]:

> This is especially true in high schools, where school systems base education on the principles of the assembly line and the efficient division of labour. Schools divide the curriculum into specialist segments: some teachers install math in the students; and others install history. They arrange the day into standard units of time, marked out by the ringing of bells, much like a factory announcing the beginning of the workday and the end of breaks. Students are educated in batches, according to age, as if the most important thing they have in common is their date of

The school system is based on the factory... Here we are in 50 minute blocks, just like in the past. We need to change... It's mind boggling that this came from the Industrial Revolution.

Community Conversation, Grande Prairie

ii "Alberta's Successful Education System," *The Economist* (September 21, 2006)

> manufacture. They are given standardized tests at set points and are compared with each other before being sent out onto the market.[iii]

In Alberta today, it is fair to say that schools still use elements of the industrial model. For example, when new technology is placed in the classroom, it is often used to support a single flow of information through an instructor. While the industrial model has been successful in educating past generations, will it be enough in a knowledge-based society? Will it encourage children to unearth their passions and fulfill their potential?

Consider four of the most significant trends that the child born in Alberta this year will undoubtedly face:

Our reliance on knowledge will change the way we live, the way we work.

Our generation has seen the rise of knowledge as a key resource of the world's economy. The "next generation economy"[4] will be knowledge-based, diverse and grounded in value-added industries. While natural resources will remain foundational to Alberta's economy, major advances in technology will impact how we access, develop and sustain our resource base.

The next generation will be challenged to find solutions to issues related to economic growth, international trade, land use, health and disease, and many others. As the amount of available information continues to grow, Albertans will need to access, select and use information competently to make informed decisions. They will be increasingly challenged to determine the accuracy of the information at their fingertips. The creativity and innovation of its citizens will become Alberta's ultimate renewable resources.

Going forward, our progress toward a knowledge-based economy may not be smooth or easy as there are differences in our communities between those who have learned to use knowledge competently and those who have not. The importance of relevant education increases as technologies develop and societal institutions experience the strain of rapid change.

China, India, and other parts of the developing world are using education to power their economies.

Some developing countries are bypassing the industrial economy, and moving directly into a knowledge-based economy. The rate of change is accelerated by reforms in education and the availability of technology. Knowledge has become their new currency.

Albertans will require new skills to compete.

iii Ken Robinson, *The Element* (New York: Viking, 2009) pp. 230-31

For example, China—using the best research—has developed a new plan for education. Teachers no longer teach by themselves; they collaborate as a group. Teachers are supported by an in-school mentor and by a principal who has undergone months of additional training. English is a mandatory subject.

At the same time, to support its economic expansion, China has expanded its system of higher education. It has increased the number of undergraduates and people who hold doctoral degrees five-fold in the decade 2000 to 2009.

India has also made huge progress in the area of education. In recent years it has implemented free and compulsory education for children between six and 14. It has also expanded literacy to approximately two-thirds of the population. India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to its economic rise. Currently there are 540 million Indians under the age of 25, many of whom will be educated in the knowledge-based economy.

Many routine jobs previously done in North America are already outsourced to these countries. Those numbers are expected to grow. In the future, Albertans will have to possess non-routine, big-picture skills like innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship if we are to remain competitive with these countries, and other emerging economies like Brazil and Russia.

There will be more competition for natural resources.

It is likely that concern for the essentials—water, land, energy and food—will grow beyond anything we have experienced. This will be true the world over, but in Alberta even more so. Alberta has a greater supply of these natural resources than almost anywhere else in the world and is simultaneously subject to more demand, as witnessed by the growth in development of the last decade. Indeed, Albertans are well aware of the issues. A priority of government is to "ensure Alberta's energy resources are developed in an environmentally sustainable way."

In the Alberta of 2030, decisions about natural resources will be increasingly complex. More than ever, education will need to equip children and youth with the skills and knowledge they will need as adults to develop innovative solutions to these challenges.

Alberta's population will be older, more diverse.

Alberta's population is aging. It is estimated that within the next decade for every two people who retire there will be less than one person to take those jobs.

At the same time, many people, attracted by Alberta's quality of life and job opportunities, are immigrating to the province. Currently,

Alberta's population grows by 80,000 every year, a number equivalent to the population of the City of Lethbridge in 2007.

As a result, Alberta's population will become increasingly diverse. The workforce will see different cultures and generations working side by side. A diverse range of cultures, languages and attitudes will require cross-cultural awareness and clear communication in the workplace. Knowledge transfer from older to younger generations will be particularly important for individuals and organizations as more workers leave the labour force.

More immigration will mean more first-generation Albertans.

The province will draw upon citizens who may have been underrepresented or under-utilized in the workforce, such as seniors, new immigrants, those with physical or developmental challenges, and Aboriginals, whose population is currently growing at twice the rate of the non-Aboriginal population.

Alberta's cities will continue to grow, but it is expected that the population of rural and remote communities will decline. Industries may be challenged to find skilled workers in rural areas, and agencies that provide services to the general population may struggle to maintain their presence. As well, decreasing enrolment in rural schools will make it difficult to offer a range of learning experiences similar to those available in urban centres.

Through all this, our system of education will continue to be challenged by a diversity of learning needs. As well, a decidedly more inclusive learning environment[5] will challenge the system to better respond to the needs of those with differing physical and developmental abilities.

Will the child born this year have the skills necessary to both continue Alberta's legacy and strengthen it? Will this child be able to keep up with the pace of change? The answer, according to Albertans who contributed to the *Inspiring Education* dialogue is "probably not." Very few Albertans believe today's children are learning in a manner that responds to current or emerging realities. Some believe we are starting to make the necessary change, but many others say the current structure of the education system prevents us from getting there.

These challenges call for an informed transformation of our education system.

More and more, Alberta's place in the world will be determined by our ability to anticipate and navigate change. Today's pace of change is greater than at any other time in history. How we define, structure, and measure the effectiveness of education in Alberta must reflect the challenges facing the generation born this year.

All Albertans have a stake in the successful education of our young people. Youth are our future leaders, workforce, volunteers, friends, and neighbours. Their success will be ours.

Creating a New Vision for Education

It has become very clear that the paradigm that has dominated the past century of school education has to be transformed. We are not tinkering, we are creating a system that will have some fundamentally different assumptions.

Inspiring Education Online Conversation

Inspiring Education presents a new vision for education which includes values, principles, and a framework for the development of policy and governance. *Inspiring Education* is informed by the four UNESCO pillars for learning—learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to live together.[iv] While it is aligned with the international perspective expressed by UNESCO, *Inspiring Education* goes beyond it to reflect distinctive Alberta values and aspirations, as well as our place in a changing global economy.

Several other public discussions about the province's education system were also considered by the Steering Committee, including:

- *Setting the Direction for Special Education*, made up of a Minister's Forum attended by 1,000 participants, both in-person and online, and previous consultations with 6,000 people. The review culminated in a number of proposed changes to better accommodate children with special needs.
- *Speak Out—The Alberta Student Engagement Initiative* engaged more than 1,600 students through small group forums across Alberta and an interactive website with thousands of posts. This engagement is ongoing.

Everyone should listen to the voices of our youth in an attentive way and value their opinions because they are the future.

Community Conversation, Bonnyville

Inspiring Education is transformational in nature. It provides direction for new practices, institutional arrangements and human interactions. It recognizes that technology, community partnerships and post-secondary institutions can enable interactions between learners, experts, advisors and mentors, wherever they may be. In so doing, *Inspiring Education* transforms the way we think about possible learning experiences and the way we address the learning needs of tomorrow.

It represents the bold and courageous thinking Albertans described as necessary to achieve significant change in the way we structure and support education. *Inspiring Education* does not lay out a process for implementation. It is intended to guide, inform and encourage decision-makers.

Dialogue with Albertans

In 2008, Premier Ed Stelmach mandated Education Minister Dave Hancock to lead an initiative that would create a long-term vision for education in Alberta. The Minister struck a 22-member Steering Committee, co-chaired by Jeff Johnson, MLA Athabasca-Redwater, and Brent McDonough, an Edmonton teacher.

iv www.unesco.org/delors/fourpil.htm; also found in UNESCO publication, *Learning: The Treasure Within*

Minister Hancock asked the Steering Committee to do three things:

- heighten appreciation of the importance of education in the life of Albertans and its increasing contribution to a prosperous society and economy,
- develop a clear understanding of what it will mean to be a successfully educated Albertan in twenty years,
- create the basis for a broad policy framework describing the overall direction, principles and long-term goals for education in Alberta (otherwise described as a framework for policy development).

A Working Committee with members from provincial government departments and education stakeholders supported the Steering Committee. The Working Committee explored a variety of policy and governance options. They were instrumental in informing the Steering Committee's subsequent analysis and dialogue.

The *Inspiring Education* dialogue was extensive, with input from all facets of Alberta's society, including:

- the public at large
- parents and legal guardians
- community and not-for-profit/volunteer organizations
- education stakeholders, including trustees
- educational organizations, including Aboriginal and Francophone
- students and youth, including students representing diverse populations (e.g., students with special needs, immigrant students, students who have not completed high school, etc.) and youth who have entered post-secondary studies or the world of work
- post-secondary institutions
- business and industry

I can now live with myself knowing I had a say in my future's future. Our First Nations' peoples had a chance to have a voice in their future and I wasn't going to pass up that opportunity even if I had to sleep in my vehicle! At least we had a chance to voice our thoughts without repercussions to us, our children, or our grandchildren. Thank you for hearing us!

Forum Participant

A variety of processes were used to involve the public, including personal conversations, multiple discussions with the public and stakeholders, and a Minister's provincial forum Other methods of engagement included: dialogue kits and online approaches – blogs, Twitter, web-casting; YouTube; wikis; discussion forums; podcasts and other social media.

As project ambassadors, Steering Committee members engaged thousands of Albertans in a comprehensive dialogue on education as a foundation for the province's future economic and societal success. They engaged Albertans through a means quite distinct from a traditional public consultation. The process was very open and transparent, in which participants articulated their vision for education and their hopes, dreams and aspirations for the children of this province.

The change required is so necessary and profound that we need to look at a whole different way of doing things. The way we are going—we will never get the change we need in the time we have without big changes now.

Forum Participant

Phase One began in early 2009 and included personal conversations in small groups, regional and community conversations and online discussions. During the spring of 2009, approximately 2,000 people shared their vision of what an educated Albertan might look like in 20 years. Many participants both identified the kinds of changes required to realize their vision and shared their personal commitment to enabling change.

I viewed this initiative as an opportunity to be part of history in the making. I will be 80 years old in 2029. I hope I will (a) be alive, (b) remember this event, and (c) have seen the fruits of the labour.

Forum Participant

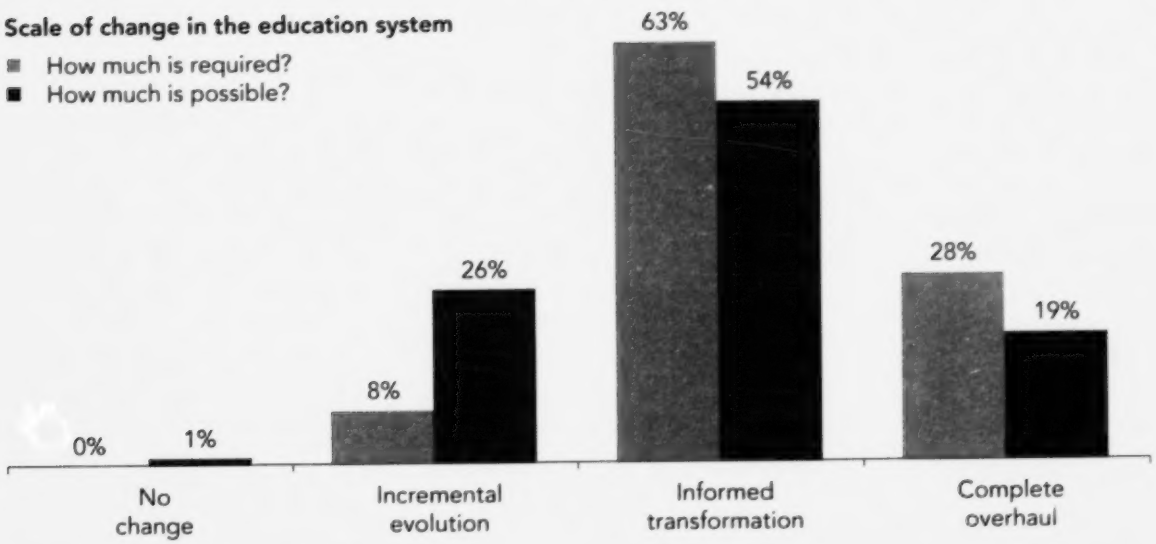
Phase Two was the Provincial Forum held in the fall of 2009. The Forum enabled more than 1,400 participants, both present and online, to contribute their voice to the dialogue and be challenged by internationally-renowned speakers. Participants further refined the vision for education. They discussed six key values to be used as the foundation for success of both the learner and the system. The participants also examined themes related to policy and governance that emerged in the spring conversations.

If the classroom of 2030 looks the same as it does today, we will know we have failed.

Alberta Cabinet Minister

Participants concluded that the education system needs more than minor change. Indeed, they advocated for an informed transformation of Alberta's education system, one that challenges commonly held beliefs and leads to new structures and approaches. While participants recognized that change may be uncomfortable, their comments conveyed the urgency and necessity of change.

Scale of change in the education system



Survey of forum participants, October 2009

Why a Vision Matters

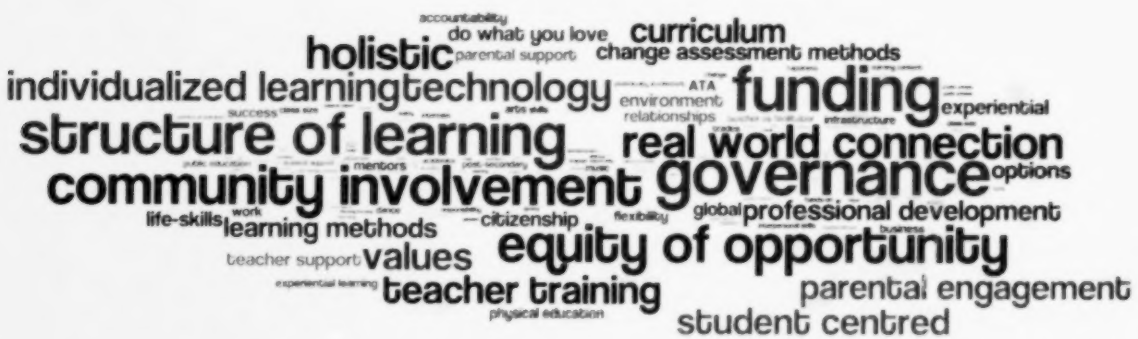
Caslan School draws almost all of its 100 students from Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement, located some nine kilometres away. In 2003, the school faced several issues: student behaviour and attendance, staff retention and provincial exam scores.

Just three years later, there was a different scene: approximately 450 people pressed into Buffalo Lake's community hall to watch the initial version of Trust Our Voices, a video filmed by the students of Caslan. They had taken cameras into the community to interview different professionals and community members about the impact of family violence. The evening began with a feast, then one of the students brought out her fiddle and played the Red River Jig. Children from the school ran to the front and began jigging. Community members watched with tears of pride as their children showcased their cultural traditions.

What had happened in the three years in between? Caslan School partnered with the national ArtsSmarts organization, and created a project sponsored by the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI). It integrated Métis heritage, culture, and the fine arts into the curriculum. That integration of culture and arts continues today as part of the school's identity. The students are learning their culture—they have performed jigging, fiddling and guitar routines across Western Canada before international audiences and government dignitaries. One of the school's graduates, has released two CDs. The students are creative, entrepreneurial, and participating in their community as engaged citizens.

Today, when Buffalo Lake students arrive at school they are personally welcomed at the front door by school staff, often with hugs and high fives. Behavioural problems are reduced, suspensions are a fraction of what they once were, and attendance is improved. Teachers and support staff are staying longer. There truly is a sense of a lasting connection between the school and Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement.

The tears of the parents that night in the community hall demonstrated more than pride. There was hope too—hope that their children could be catalysts of change. Clearly, a vision has been formed at Caslan School and Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement.



From the Calgary Community Conversation, May 23, 2009

2. The Vision

For the child born in 2010, what will it mean to be an educated Albertan?

Education is far bigger and more important than just training and educating young people for jobs.

Forum Participant

The Steering Committee listened to thousands of Albertans. That input formed the basis for the following portrait of an educated Albertan in 2030. This Albertan will be well-positioned to manage the challenges and opportunities of our common future: an increasing focus on knowledge; competition from developing economies, changing demographics, and more diversity. But education is about more than preparing our children and youth for work. It must encourage learners to discover and pursue their passions; make successful transitions to adulthood; and create life-long learners who contribute to healthy, inclusive communities and thriving economies.

Implementing the vision will demand the support of families, leaders, communities, and the entire province.

This vision gives those who support children and youth an ideal for which to strive. It includes every learner regardless of background, need or circumstance. In no case will progress toward the vision be achieved without the support of the broader community.

Some may claim the transformation to achieve this vision is already underway. Indeed, some of what is outlined in this report is happening in pockets throughout the province. However, discussions with thousands of Albertans confirmed that innovative examples like Caslan School are in the minority. To truly transform education, the system must empower innovation throughout the province.

Albertans articulated their vision for education through specific outcomes which have been summarized as "the Three E's" of education for the 21st Century. Albertans told us the K-12 system should strive to nurture the following qualities and abilities in our youth.

This is how educated Albertans would describe themselves in 2030:

Engaged Thinker: *"I collaborate to create new knowledge."*

I am competent in the **arts and sciences**, including **languages.** I know how to **think critically and creatively**, and how to make discoveries—through inquiry, reflection, exploration, experimentation, and trial and error. I use technology to learn, innovate, collaborate, communicate, and discover. I have developed a **wide range of competencies** in many areas including the gathering, analysis and evaluation of information.

Because I am familiar with multiple perspectives and disciplines, I can first identify problems and then find the best solutions. As a team member, I integrate ideas from a variety of sources into a coherent whole and communicate these ideas to others.

As I have grown up, I have seen many changes in society and the economy. **I adapt to change** with an attitude of optimism and hope for the future. As a **life-long learner**, I believe there is no limit to what knowledge may be gleaned, what skills may be accumulated, and what may be achieved in cooperation with others. And always, I keep growing and learning.

Ethical Citizen: *"I do the right thing because it is the right thing to do."*

It's not all about me. I have learned about and appreciate the effort and sacrifice that built this province and country. My education has helped me see beyond my self-interests to the needs of the community. As a result, **I contribute** fully to the world around me—economically, culturally, socially and politically. As a **steward of the earth**, I minimize environmental impacts wherever I go.

I build relationships through humility; fairness and open-mindedness; and with **teamwork** and communication. I engage with many cultures, religions, and languages. This enables me to **value diversity** in all people and adapt to any situation. I demonstrate respect, **empathy** and compassion for all people.

I can **care for myself** physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, and spiritually, yet I am able to ask for help when needed from others and for others**.** I am well-prepared to **assume the responsibilities** of life – whether they be the duties of a parent, a neighbour, a mentor, or an employee or employer.

Entrepreneurial Spirit: *"I create new opportunities."*

I am motivated, **resourceful**, and **self-reliant**. Many people describe me as tenacious because I continuously set goals and work with perseverance and discipline to achieve them. Through hard work, **I earn my achievements** and the respect of others. I strive for **excellence** and personal success.

I am **competitive** and ready to challenge the status quo. I explore ideas and technologies by myself and as part of diverse teams. I am resilient and adaptable, and have the ability and determination to transform my discoveries into products or services that benefit my community and by extension, the world.

I have the confidence to take risks and make bold decisions in the face of adversity, recognizing that to hold back is to be held back. I have the courage to dream.

Values

Values are the beliefs and ideals we consider critical as we make decisions about education. Albertans expressed a desire for an education system rooted in these values: opportunity, fairness, citizenship, choice, diversity, and excellence. These values must be embraced by all who comprise the learning community: learners, parents, families, educators, support staff, governors, and a diverse group of stakeholders. They must be reflected in every decision related to curriculum, teaching, assessment[6], policy and governance.

The six core values, affirmed in community discussions, underpin the 3E's of education. The values apply to every learner, including those who are urban, rural, Aboriginal, disabled, gifted, and of minority cultures.

Opportunity

Learners are exposed to rich learning experiences that enable them to discover their passions and achieve their highest potential.

> *To My Grandchildren: When I think of learning in 20 years, I hope that you are able to take advantage of most, if not all, opportunities that came your way. Remember that learning is a life-long experience, with many challenges and opportunities that make us who we are.* (Community Conversation – Bonnyville)

Fairness

Learners have access to the programs, support services, and instructional excellence needed to achieve desired outcomes.

> *Students: When I think of learning in 20 years, I hope that each and every one of you will feel that you belong and have a place in the education system. I hope that we can truly meet your needs and support your dreams.* (Community Conversation – Red Deer)

Citizenship

Learners have pride in their community and culture. They have a sense of belonging and work to improve both the community and the world.

> *To My Child: When I think of learning in 20 years, I hope you reflect on your education and are able to go out to the world and be an inspiring, contributing member of society, be globally responsible for your environment and embrace all the cultures surrounding you and be actively contributing to education for yourself and your kids.* (Community Conversation – Grande Prairie)

Choice

Learners have a choice of both programs and methods of learning[7].

> *My Children: When I think of learning in 20 years, I hope that you are encouraged to learn at your own pace and aspire to new heights as you make your life choices. I want you to be your own individual and not be judged because your learning style is different. I want you to accept yourself –and others– for who you are.* (Community Conversation – Calgary)

Diversity

Learners' differing needs, cultures, and abilities are respected and valued within inclusive learning environments.

> *Future Students: I hope that all students, including the First Nations and Aboriginal peoples will have a significant role and place in Alberta and in the world. I hope the traditional ways of learning are utilized in our classrooms and values related to nurturing a healthy society have a role in shaping our education system.* (Community Conversation – Bonnyville)

> *I hope for a more diverse and multicultural learning experience.* (Community Conversation – Medicine Hat)

Excellence

Learners, teachers, and governors achieve high standards.

> *I hope that our educators are equipped with a knowledge that is as deep as it is broad, and are motivated to walk the extra mile and encourage their students to do the same to reach their fullest potential. I also hope that each student has the opportunity to pursue excellence in any endeavour they choose—and that government and administrators allow this to happen.* (Community Conversation – Lethbridge).

3. Policy Shifts to Achieve the Vision

Policy, in its essence, is a blueprint for a consistent course of action. Decision-makers can interpret policy at different levels including administrative, program-level, and strategic.

Inspiring Education is charged with addressing the highest level of policy: to recommend an overarching and forward-looking policy direction that will shape Alberta's approach to education to 2030.

To achieve the vision of an educated Albertan in 2030, Albertans said we need to make the following shifts **in policy**:

LESS	MORE
Focused on the school	Focused on education
Centred on the system	Centred on the learner
Focused on content	Building competencies
Technology to support teaching	Technology to support the creation and sharing of knowledge

Focused on Education

The school is an icon. We traditionally think of education as what happens through a prescribed curriculum[8] within the walls and regular hours of a school.

However, we all know that learning can occur anywhere at any time and that some of the most important life lessons occur outside of the institutional setting of a classroom. To achieve the vision of the educated Albertan in 2030, Albertans said we must abandon our image of what school is, and attend to what education really is and what it must become.

Our concept of education should expand beyond the school and integrate the community, the environment and the "real world." We should make the community[9] a true partner in the education experience.

The education experience should offer:

- **Support for the family**. As the primary guides and decision-makers for the children, parents and families would be supported by the community through integrated supports and learning opportunities. Educators and governors can better understand the diverse needs of children and communities by fully using tools like early childhood mapping which helps to identify needs at an early age. Armed with research information, educators and governors, together with the relevant departments and agencies, can "map" out plans to better coordinate and deliver supports to children and their families. These supports will assist all children to take full advantage of the education opportunities available to them. Also, opportunities for parental participation in education could be enhanced. In community conversations, Albertans suggested using technology to connect schools with parents in their homes and workplaces. They also suggested more flexible school schedules to give parents more opportunities to participate in learning-related activities.
- **Sources of leadership**. Leadership, teaching, and advice from experts, mentors and elders can be found in the community, whether it be local, provincial, national or even global. This leadership may reflect cultural ties, business associations, volunteer opportunities, and areas of specific interest. For example, the teacher might invite an expert in from the community to teach a class, perhaps in financial management or stage design. The expert might teach the class independently or with the teacher. In a system that is more learner-centred, Albertans see the role of the teacher changing from that of a knowledge authority to an architect of learning—one who plans, designs and oversees learning activities. Albertans said the teacher should consider the interests, talents, passions and natural curiosities of the learner. The teacher should inspire and motivate, while planting the seeds for life-long learning.
- **The prospect of life-long learning.** Learners require seamless transitions into post-secondary life: 70 percent of new jobs require some post-secondary education.[v] Learners should be able to access post-secondary courses while still in high school, gain awareness of advanced or alternative areas of study, and be exposed to possible career paths. Of course, learning does not occur only in educational settings. It must be recognized that opportunities for learning also occur in the workplace, in the community, and in the broader world around us.

Most schools I've visited in the twenty-first century look and feel exactly like the central Ohio public schools I attended in the 1970s. The classrooms are the same size. The desks stand in the same rows. Bulletin boards preview the next national holiday. The hallways even smell the same. Sure, some classrooms might have a computer or two. But in most respects, the schools American children attend today seem indistinguishable from the ones their parents and grandparents attended generations earlier.

Author Daniel Pink, *Free Agent Nation: How America's New Independent Workers Are Transforming the Way We Live*. New York: Warner Business Books, 2001.

Education can take place in any setting, not only the classroom. A class of 30 could see 15 learning in the classroom, five learning on the farm, five learning at home, and five learning in the community.

Alberta School Trustee

I would like to know that our education system works with our health system to support our children to become healthy adults.

Community Conversation, Medicine Hat

I hope that we have ... teachers who are passionate about their role as educators and inspire their students to be lifelong learners.

Community Conversation, Lethbridge

v www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/LessonsInLearning/LinI200900401PSEUnderrepresented.htm.

My child: I hope you learn to trust yourself and that your learning leads you to the work you love.

Community Conversation, Calgary

If the community becomes a truly engaged partner in education, expected changes in education would include:

- greater emphasis on experiential learning[10] both in and outside of the classroom;
- the integration of multiple perspectives, including cultural, in the learning experience;
- simultaneous participation in global classes taught by experts and enabled by technology and;
- recognition of skills obtained outside of the classroom, in what we now call "extra-curricular" activities. If learners participate in sports, work, volunteerism, and community activities, they will acquire knowledge and develop competencies relevant to the 3E's, their passions and career plans.

Ma chérie... Parle a tes enfants, raconte leur l'histoire de notre famille. Apprends-leur à danser, à cuisiner, à jouer, à chanter et à s'épanouir dans notre culture.

Community Conversation, Grande Prairie

[My dear... Speak to your children; tell them the story of our family. Teach them to dance, to cook, to play, to sing and to achieve their potential in our culture.]

More community involvement would give learners greater exposure to different experiences and perspectives, leading to greater balance in life. Learners would also gain an appreciation for personal growth associated with giving back to the community.

If the walls that separate the school from the community are dismantled, the community will also benefit. During community conversations, many Albertans described the school as a gathering place for the community, a public resource that could serve multiple purposes. Participants in *Inspiring Education* made specific suggestions for enhancing the role of the school:

- provide a range of community services through the school building, including library, professional, recreational and daycare.
- establish the school as a "community learning centre" that is accessible to all people within the community.
- facilitate intergenerational learning within the school setting which encourages more interaction between children and older adults.

It takes a village to raise a child; the school is centre of the community, it is the hub of the neighbourhood.

Community Conversation, Fort McMurray

A broader role for the school in the community will develop stronger networks especially among different agencies and services.

Centred on Learners

In the Alberta education system, like others, learning is structured by the Carnegie Unit. It was developed in 1906 as a measure of the amount of time a learner has studied a subject. For example, a learner may currently study science four times a week for 40-50 minutes over the course of the school year. The teacher must cover a set amount of content during that time (curriculum) and the learner earns a credit for the course.

Some consider the focus on time to be a deterrent to innovation in the education system. It forces schools to equate educational experience with time spent in class, without recognizing the unique needs, strengths, challenges and passions of individual learners. Instead of making decisions based on what is best for the child, the focus is on time. The Carnegie Unit also arbitrarily categorizes learning into discrete units or subjects which is the opposite of what happens in the real world.

For learners to achieve their full potential, education must make the child the centre of *all* decisions related to learning and education. Learners should be supported as individuals with learning opportunities to support their unique needs and interests. Furthermore, activities that consider the abilities of learners and encourage creativity and imagination should become the norm.

> We need to move away from the one size fits all and move into the individual needs and learning styles and challenges of each individual. Each hand is different and yet we treat each one the same.
>
> Community Conversation, Calgary

Curriculum should be available in a variety of forms to be accessed in-person or virtually. It should also be collaborative or independent, and at one's own pace. Perhaps there will be different start and end times to a school day, class or year. Perhaps school will be available around the clock, seven days a week. Perhaps the current grouping of learners according to fixed age and grade will no longer be relevant.

Building Competencies

In times past, a person was considered knowledgeable if they merely possessed information (or "content"). As technology makes information instantly available, it is no longer possessed solely by experts. Additionally, as the pace of change increases across the globe, the meaning of the word "knowledge" is changing.

As we focus more on competencies, there will be less emphasis on knowing something, and more emphasis on knowing how to access information about it. There is also greater focus on how to think and do things. For example, when studying the concepts of measurement, area and scale, learners could move beyond learning formulas. They might use these concepts to redesign their bedrooms or playrooms. In doing so, they develop the competencies to take information (or content) and make it relevant to real-life situations. A person is considered knowledgeable if they can gather, analyze and synthesize information like this in order to create knowledge or find solutions to problems.

In 20 years, I see learning with more personalized programs. I want to be able to learn about more practical things and have more hands-on learning experiences rather than textbook learning.

Personal Conversation

The educated Albertan of 2030 should demonstrate the following competencies. In other words, he or she should be able to:

- know how to learn—to gain knowledge, understanding or skills through experience, study, and interaction with others.
- think critically—conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate to construct knowledge.
- identify and solve complex problems.
- manage information—access, interpret, evaluate and use information effectively, efficiently, and ethically.
- innovate—create and generate new ideas or concepts.
- create opportunities—through play, imagination, reflection, negotiation, and competition—with an entrepreneurial spirit.
- apply multiple literacies—reading, writing, mathematics, technology, languages, media, and personal finance.
- demonstrate good communication skills and the ability to work cooperatively with others.
- demonstrate global and cultural understanding.
- identify and apply career and life skills.

I hope that students will learn team building and the social skills needed to appreciate the new diversity in our society. They also need critical thinking skills to be sound citizens who are challenged to make wise decisions that will benefit all of society.

Community Conversation, Edmonton

The competencies required by children and youth may change over time. However, the overall focus on competencies will shift education away from a process of disseminating information to a process of inquiry and discovery. Learners would still study reading, writing and mathematics, but they would focus more deeply on a curriculum that allows for more interdisciplinary studies.

For example, to study history, students might be given an opportunity to travel. They would read, examine archives, analyze documents, interview experts, and engage in the re-creation of historical events. They would interpret past events and their impact on today's world. As a result, they might identify similar situations or problems and look for solutions. They would augment their study of facts with experience of a people, a place, and a culture. Or, with coming advancements in technology, they may be able to approximate this study and experience it without leaving their classroom. In so doing, they might be exposed to what is involved in becoming an individual with expert abilities, skills and knowledge.

Literacy is more than the ability to read and write. It involves the knowledge, skills and abilities—the competencies—that enable individuals to think critically, communicate effectively, deal with change and solve problems in a variety of contexts to achieve their personal goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in society.

Government of Alberta, Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta's Next Generation Economy, page 6

Inspiring Education recognizes that learners will acquire competencies on a continuum, with each learner starting and ending at different points. Learners will make progress when they master competencies like critical thinking, problem solving, innovation and creativity—not necessarily by age and grade. The current required hours of study for each subject area might not be applicable. Likewise, our current way of credentialing—using grade levels and required hours of study—may lose relevance.

To measure core competencies, assessment would also change. For example, in community conversations Albertans stressed the need for diverse approaches to assess learner competencies such as innovation and critical thinking, including the use of qualitative measures.

To assess the success of the broader education system, the provincial government looks at indicators like the literacy and numeracy of graduates, high school completion rates, and the percentage of students pursuing post-secondary education. The ongoing dialogue arising from *Inspiring Education* needs to identify new and additional ways of measuring success from this broader perspective.

A focus on competencies would give learners more flexibility to build their own programs of study, enrol in courses offered by post-secondary institutions, or engage in experiential learning in the community.

Albertans were also clear that teachers must achieve excellence to inspire the same level of achievement in learners. Other than parents and families, Albertans see the teacher as the single most important contributor to learner success. How we prepare teachers and how we assure teaching excellence would need to change to align with the policy shifts.

Learners in particular told us that teachers need to be innovative, passionate and positive about teaching. These qualities can be nurtured through a variety of policies and practices, including a less restrictive curriculum, meaningful professional development, and structures that allow for regular exchange of ideas and best practices.

In the publication *How the world's best performing school systems stay on top*, McKinsey and Company describe the relationship between learner and teacher:

> The top-performing schools recognize that the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction: learning occurs when students and teachers interact, and thus to improve learning implies improving the quality of that interaction. They have understood which interactions are effective in achieving this—coaching classroom practice, moving teacher training to the classroom, developing stronger school leaders, and enabling teachers to learn from each other—and have found ways to deliver these interventions throughout their school system.[vi]

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government to *develop a policy framework* to ensure our Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system is innovative and competency-based by exploring incentives to encourage early graduation and by promoting real world learning opportunities and programs that help engage elementary students facing difficulties.

Private Member's Motion, Spring 2009, MLA Manmeet Singh Bhullar

In the following excerpt from an article from *Voices Inside Schools*, Dr. Sharon Friesen writes of the power of the relationship of teacher to students. With only a rope knotted into 12 sections, some stories, and superb preparation, the teachers guide the students on a study of the Greek philosopher Pythagoras and his contribution to mathematics. They engage students to think critically and imaginatively in an exploration that takes them all at once through history, geography, and mathematics:

vi McKinsey and Company, *How the world's best performing school systems stay on top* (September 2007): page 29

Pat and I (teachers) learned the stories of the mystical Pythagoras and his disciples when we first set out on this journey together in our irregularly shaped classroom with fifty-some Grade 1/2 children. Now here we were, once again telling the secrets of these early mathematicians and their quest to unite numbers and shapes to fifty-some Grade 8 children. These students were just as enchanted by the stories of these ancient radicals as the younger children had been. "Good mathematics ultimately comes from and returns to good stories—and the questions that bug you"[vii]—stories that have the power to open an engaging mathematical space in which compelling mathematical explorations invite and entice both the novice and expert mathematician. In this space, right angle triangles are so much more than finding the length of the hypotenuse using the handy formula—a theorem that still bears the Pythagorean name.

Invoking a 3-4-5 triangle and unfolding its beauty and simplicity necessitates the story of a man, an outcaste *(sic)*. How else can we let the students know that this simple formula carries with it the weight of history? It stands the test of time. It still stands as a pillar in trigonometry. This act of measurement is a fundamental one that reaches back to Ancient Egypt. Using a rope knotted into 12 sections stretched out to form a 3-4-5 triangle, rope-stretchers reclaimed and re-established the boundaries of land and set order to the watery chaos created by the annual flooding of the Nile.

From the Medicine Hat Community Conversation, May 27, 2009

vii Casey, N. & Fellows, M. (1993). This is megamathematics! Los Alamos, New Mexico: Los Alamos National Laboratory. Also available from Internet: www.c3.lanl.gov/megamath/menu.html.

Technology to Support the Creation and Sharing of Knowledge

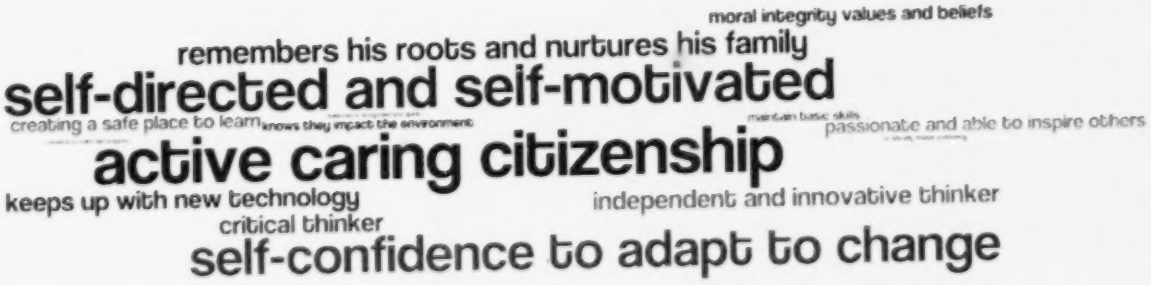
Today teachers commonly use digital information technology like presentation software and websites as instructional tools. Some also use technology to identify learner strengths and weaknesses, to engage parents in monitoring their children's learning, and to develop personalized learning programs.

The future will present more opportunities as digital technologies are embedded in everyday life and materials. If we are to shape the future of education and not have it shaped for us, we must become more purposeful in our approach to technology. We need to understand what may be emerging, its implications, and how it can be used for education.

Ultimately, the power of technology should be harnessed to support innovation and discovery, not simply to aid teaching. We need to engage learners to use these new technologies as designers and creators of knowledge.

A second, equally important role is assistive technology. This technology can help learners with special needs to more fully participate in learning activities. Intelligent clothing already exists to measure changes in body chemistry and alert others to potential health issues. Software programs that convert graphics and text to speech help those with visual impairments to access information and learning resources. It is reasonable to assume that assistive technology will continue to break down barriers for those with special learning needs.

> Interaction with digital technologies will be more pervasive, seamless and invisible than today and will facilitate much of our everyday lives—enabling ongoing interactions with people, building and materials and with a constantly connected network. We will be able to tap into unimaginable computing power and reliable storage capacity on the network, which will enable us to interact with more intelligent (and responsive) technologies, to outsource memory, and to use simulations and visualization tools to solve problems, experience alternative realities and prepare for new experiences.
>
> From www.futurelab.org.uk, Hans Daanen and Keri Facer, *2020 and beyond: Future scenarios for education in the age of new technologies*, 2007


moral integrity values and beliefs
remembers his roots and nurtures his family
self-directed and self-motivated
creating a safe place to learn
knows they impact the environment
maintain basic skills
passionate and able to inspire others
active caring citizenship
keeps up with new technology
independent and innovative thinker
critical thinker
self-confidence to adapt to change

From the Bonnyville Community Conversation, June 3, 2009

Research to aid education

Athabasca University, two rural school divisions, and a major multinational technology company have embarked on a research project that will adapt current online and mobile technologies to deliver educational courses to students in remote locations, such as rural settings and work camps. Mobile technologies will include smart phones, digital audio players and mobile computing platforms.

A goal of the research is to develop new technologies specifically designed for a collaborative learning environment. These technologies will "learn" with the student. They will adapt to the learning needs of both an individual student and student groups by posing questions and identifying appropriate research and support materials unique to the students' situation. The research will help to personalize the learning experience.

Key benefits of this project include:

- K-12 students in remote areas and in rural communities with low enrolments will be able to access high quality programs.
- Students outside of major centres will have an easier transition to post-secondary education. The project will demonstrate how they can take post-secondary courses in their home communities with the support of technology.
- The project, while strongly research-led, is expected to also contribute to commercial endeavours, thereby creating a competitive edge for Canada in this emerging field.

From the Lethbridge Community Conversation, May 20, 2009

4. Guiding Principles

In order to achieve these policy shifts, the following principles must shape the future of education in Alberta. The principles assume the active support of all partners in education, including parents and families, teachers, support staff, governors, government, business, communities and not-for-profit organizations.

Learner-centred

Decision makers should consider the needs of children and youth first and foremost when making decisions.

Shared Responsibility and Accountability

Acknowledging that parents are the primary guides and decision-makers for children, all partners in education should share responsibility and accountability for education outcomes.

Engaged Communities

Community resources should be fully engaged to support learners, including expertise, facilities, services and learning opportunities. Community resources—whether local, provincial, national or global—should actively participate in the education of learners.

To my son... when I think of education in 20 years, I hope that your teachers have loved you and nurtured you and helped you to become a "ready citizen" for your adult journey of life. I hope your teachers have instilled the power of life-long learning and teamwork.

Community Conversation, Fort McMurray

Inclusive, Equitable Access

Every learner should have fair and reasonable access to educational opportunities regardless of ability, economic circumstance, location, or cultural background. Their needs and ways of life should be respected and valued within an inclusive learning environment. Some learners will require additional, specialized supports to fully access these opportunities.

Responsive, Flexible Approach

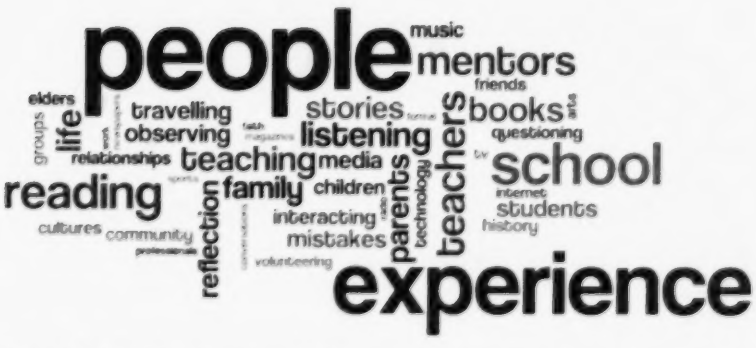
Children and youth should have meaningful learning opportunities appropriate to each learner's developmental stage, including learning that is experiential, multi-disciplinary, community-based, and self-paced. To ensure the learning opportunities are relevant, the education system must be nimble in responding to the changing needs of communities and the world.

Sustainable and Efficient Use of Resources

Decision-makers should identify and adopt strategies and structures that optimize resources (financial and human) and minimize duplication.

Innovation to Promote and Strive for Excellence

Creativity and innovation are central to achieving excellence in education. Learners, educators and governors must be creative, innovative and entrepreneurial to attain the highest possible standards.



From the Red Deer Community Conversation, June 10, 2009

5. Implications for Governance

In order to achieve the policy changes outlined in this document, how education is governed should also align with the policy shifts and guiding principles of *Inspiring Education*. Albertans believe that the community has an important role to play in the coming changes. They also believe that governance must make learners and the learning experience its core concern, always asking: what is in the best interests of the child?

The *Inspiring Education* Steering Committee did not have a mandate to define specific governance structures or processes for the future. However, it did reflect on the governance implications of what it heard from Albertans.

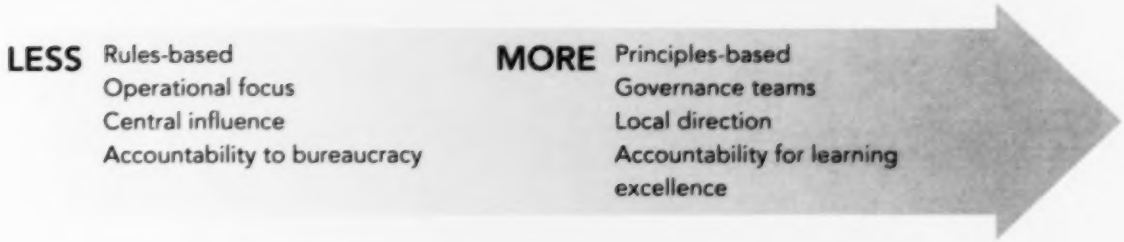
Governance answers the question, "who does what?"

It might be useful to first review three of the terms commonly associated with governance:

- **Government** is the formal structure mandated by law to establish and implement policies to achieve clearly defined outcomes at the provincial and local levels.
- **Governance**, in the context of the Government of Alberta, is often understood as the process by which the government assures outcomes. However, in the larger context it is the action undertaken by government in partnership with other organizations and citizens to establish and implement policy. Policy needs to be continually reviewed and refreshed, and the community needs to be involved in its implementation.
- **Governors** are leaders who are responsible for assuring optimal outcomes for the learners and the communities they serve. "With input from stakeholders inside and outside the organization,

leaders are expected to shape agendas, not impose priorities; to allocate attention, not dictate results; and to define problems, not mandate solutions."[viii]

Specifically, the Steering Committee identified the following shifts required to better align governance with policy:



Principles-based

Governing bodies today generally make decisions based on policies and procedures, often compiled in manuals many centimetres thick. A move to governance that is more principles-based will mean fewer rules and more opportunities for innovation.

Traditionally governors have performed two leadership roles:

- Fiduciary leadership: the exercise of legal responsibilities of oversight and stewardship including the responsible allocation and management of financial resources.
- Strategic leadership: decision-making about resources, programs and services for education to reflect longstanding priorities and emerging trends and issues.

In discussions, Albertans indicated they want governors to make decisions based more on flexible principles and less on rigid rules. In instances when governing bodies find that precedent, procedures, and rules no longer serve the needs of learners, governors can look to the guiding principles as a touchstone for their decisions.

Governing bodies would use the guiding principles to help make decisions. They would ensure decisions:

- are learner-centred
- demonstrate shared responsibility and accountability
- engage the community
- are inclusive and equitable
- are responsive, flexible
- innovate to promote and strive for excellence
- use resources efficiently

Governance Teams

How can governance better engage the community as defined in the guiding principles? How can it help to ensure the delivery of integrated supports and learning opportunities?

If we recognize that education includes more than what happens within school boundaries (as described in the policy shift "Focused on Education"), local governors should strive to engage the whole community in ownership of the education system.

viii Richard P. Chait et al, Governance as Leadership (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, 2005)

Governance can better include the community by linking many different stakeholders—both traditional and non-traditional—into a governance team: parents; families; educators; and representatives of municipalities; cultural groups; professional and not-for-profit organizations; businesses; employer groups; libraries; post-secondary institutions; First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities; and government bodies with interests in children and education

Currently, governors are mostly elected. In the future, members of the governance team could be elected, appointed, or recruited from the community. The strength of a governance team is in attracting a range of stakeholders who collectively bring a variety of perspectives to the entire education system, perspectives that are unique to the community. For example, a surge in the number of immigrant students may prompt the governance team to recruit parents and youth from the multi-cultural community (if not already well-represented) to participate on the team. In areas where there are significant drop-out rates, governance teams might seek out representation from youth who have left school to gain a better understanding of their issues and needs.

Our future needs all of us to contribute in ways that we can. This will take strong leadership to build a shared vision and to coordinate an integrated response.

Community Conversation, Edmonton

The participation of the broader community on the governance team will also help ensure the coordinated delivery of services and supports to children and youth. Many of these services may be offered through professionals and agencies that are linked to the school, with possible representation on the governance team. They might include those working in the health and mental-health fields, as well as mentors, and local experts.

A governance team structure would allow for the emergence of a third leadership role for governors, in addition to the two described earlier:

- generative leadership: consideration of the underlying meaning or long-term implications of an issue. The governance team would assume a more public role, one that engages the community in an ongoing dialogue to deepen everyone's understanding of issues and trends and to generate new ideas.

A generative role enables a broader and more creative discussion of alternative directions for an organization—directions which may take the form of targeted actions and innovative programs and partnerships.

To illustrate with an example: assume a governance team is considering a request to upgrade science labs in local schools. In its fiduciary role, the governance team would ask, "What equipment can we afford, and what would be a good investment of resources over time?" In its strategic role, it could ask, "What kind of experiments will students need to perform to build the required competencies for tomorrow's workplaces?" In a generative role, the governance team

could ask the questions, "Where does science-related learning best occur? Which stakeholders have an interest in this science-related learning? Are they already doing it? Where and how? What kinds of issues could we address together that would provide a vehicle for this learning?" This kind of generative thinking reframes the issue, and could lead to a variety of learning strategies and partnerships beyond an upgraded science lab including partnerships with universities and colleges, businesses, museums, park systems, hospitals and health care providers.

Local Direction

Albertans indicated that they want their local governance teams freed to make learning their key concern. They want local governors focused on what is in the best interests of learners and decisions centred around those learners. Any non-core responsibilities might be more efficiently handled elsewhere.

I will provide strong leadership, build effective partnerships and ensure each student's needs are met.

Community Conversation, Red Deer

Further, governors should be empowered to pursue creative arrangements for all learners in their communities, taking into account the diverse characteristics of the community, including culture and learning needs. For example, distance and class size may limit the curriculum choices of high school youth in rural or remote Alberta communities. Local governors may choose to partner with other provincial, national or international jurisdictions to offer more choices for their youth.

Also, by creating strong relationships at the local level, governors could take advantage of local services and supports, as well as learning experiences that might otherwise be unavailable to learners.

In 2030, greater flexibility and discretion at the local level should be the norm. Governance would become less top-down and more consensual.

Currently, performance of governors is often assessed through compliance with standards and procedures—monitoring outcome measures, benchmarks, and internal and external scans. In the future, the governance team might also be assessed on its effectiveness to respond to the values and needs of the learners it serves.

Further, local governors can more readily achieve excellence if they are supported to build the competencies necessary to assure a responsive and inclusive education system. Training for the position of chair is particularly crucial for the success of the governance team.

Accountability for Learning Excellence

In 2030, if Alberta is to truly foster learning excellence, there will be no "one-size-fits-all" approach. What is taught, how it is taught,

and how the community is engaged will reflect what is valuable to the community. Similarly, accountability processes will reflect the appropriate degree of complexity and formality required by teachers, governors, leaders, managers and funders.

During community conversations, however, the Steering Committee became aware of a widespread perception that accountability today is too narrowly focused on how well learners perform on exams. Regardless of the validity of this perception, accountability, when viewed from the perspective of governance teams, becomes concerned more with learning, governance and teaching excellence—the fulfillment of the 3E's and the guiding principles. Indeed, the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) program has shown that local initiatives have the best chance of success when all stakeholders, including teachers and principals, participate from the very beginning, and there is a consensus on the learner needs being addressed.

In 2007 elections, 62% of trustees serving in Alberta were acclaimed into office. How can we get more people involved in governance?

The success of the education system has often been reflected in learner assessments, and other measures such as the use of research, collaboration and professional development. However, new processes are required to continuously evaluate whether the education system is "living" the vision of Albertans: that is, ensuring the policy shifts, guiding principles and governance structures are yielding the desired results.

Government of Alberta

Through *Inspiring Education*, Albertans have signalled a number of expectations for government. Albertans want the provincial government to work collaboratively with others to lead the changes in education, using the regulatory and policy instruments at its disposal. Where institutions and agencies share a common purpose regarding the welfare of children and youth, Albertans want the provincial government to lead by aligning the mandate of government ministries and developing and implementing integrated programs and services. Above all, Albertans expect their government to assure the overall quality of the education system, as well as its transformation.

I will be more involved in my community to understand the values/needs of the community... I will be the bridge between the emerging generation and the community members who are afraid of the changes they see coming.

Community Conversation, Red Deer

The following is a fictional story. But it is based on examples of shared governance emerging in Alberta. It illustrates governance that focuses on the learner and involves the community.

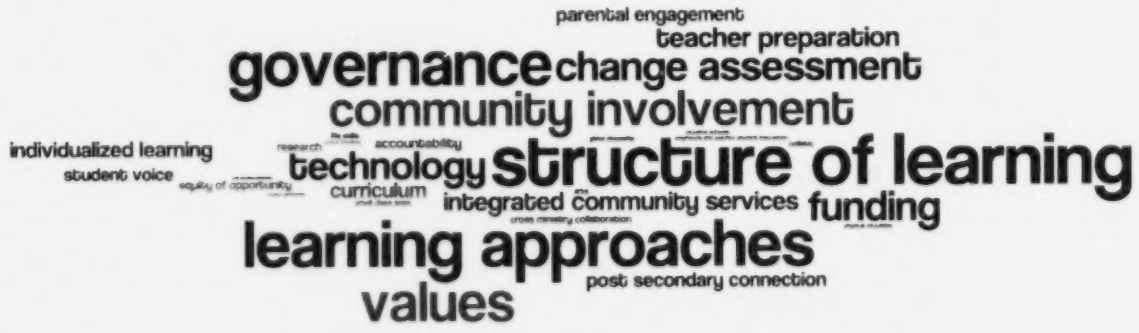
Finding leadership through governance teams

Kim manages a mountain tour company, offering white-water rafting in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter and has one child, Chris. Chris is about to enter high school, and is interested in a career in the tourism industry, where there are anticipated growth opportunities. Kim would like Chris to be able to learn using the experience readily at hand in the local tour company and other enterprises in town, but the high school does not offer specific programs related to tourism.

Kim talked to the school superintendent about Chris's interest and needs. The superintendent knew the local community college was planning to expand its programs to include tourism management, and knew that the college hoped to include a means to stream candidates from high schools in surrounding communities into its programs.

The superintendent noted that the college and school division were partnering on this initiative and suggested that Kim volunteer as a parent representative for the governance team that would develop the proposal to expand the college's programs. As a business person Kim was concerned about the time required as well as having the necessary network of contacts to represent the entire town in a governance team. The superintendant was convinced that since Kim was a parent this viewpoint would be enough. Kim would serve with the principal from the local high school along with 20 others, including officials from other municipalities and schools, other parents and students, representatives of the local hospitality industry, and managers from the college.

Kim met every two weeks with the governance team over a period of two years, first to develop the college's proposal, ensuring that the interests of participating communities were well served, and then to guide the development of the infrastructure and technology within the college and the communities. Kim expects upon finishing high school Chris will have the opportunity to smoothly transition into post-secondary study of the tourism industry.



From the Edmonton Community Conversation, June 20, 2009

6. Moving Forward

Participants of the *Inspiring Education* dialogue were clear—an informed transformation of our province's education system is required to prepare our children for tomorrow's world.

Inspiring Education is the first step of a long journey. By seeking more community involvement, *Inspiring Education* promotes ongoing public engagement in our education system. It sets the stage for transformational change and lends support to many other government initiatives, including *Setting the Direction for Special Education.*

The Government of Alberta will need to determine immediate priorities and timelines for implementation if it accepts the vision outlined in this report. It will need to collaborate with stakeholders to:

- create new policy frameworks and governance structures that articulate and embed the vision of *Inspiring Education.*
- implement a competency-based system.
- review assessment to align with a competency-based system.
- develop a process of continuous evaluation to ensure the system is achieving the desired outcomes.

Building on the efforts of all those who contributed to *Inspiring Education*, we will continue our journey to transform education and ensure the child born this year is prepared for the challenges and opportunities of 2030.

> Computers are not rescuing the school from a weak curriculum, any more than putting pianos in every classroom would rescue a flawed music program. Wonderful learning can occur without computers or even paper. But once the teachers and children are enfranchised as explorers, computers, like pianos, can serve as powerful amplifiers, extending the reach and depth of the learners.
>
> Alan Kay,
> American Computer Scientist

Endnotes

1 In the spring community conversations participants provided responses to a range of discussion questions. Answers to specific questions were graphically rendered using a "word cloud" application (www.wordle.net). In these diagrams, the size of the word or phrase reflects the frequency with which it occurred in the conversation. Larger words or phrases were said more frequently than smaller ones. A summary report of the 10 public conversations was also produced and Wordles were generated from the combined responses of all participants. Below is a list of the pages where a Wordle is depicted and the accompanying question it answers.

- Page 3 - What are your hopes, dreams and aspirations for future learning?
- Page 8 - What are your hopes, dreams and aspirations for future learning?
- Page 9 - What are your hopes, dreams and aspirations for future learning?
- Page 17 - What bold and courageous ideas and decisions were made 20 years ago to improve education?
- Page 28 - What are the ways you have learned what you know today?
- Page 29 - What qualities and abilities will an Albertan need in the 21st century?
- Page 30 - What qualities and abilities will an Albertan need in the 21st century?
- Page 32 - What are the ways you have learned what you know today?
- Page 38 - What bold and courageous ideas and decisions were made 20 years ago to improve education?
- Page 40 - Where are all the places that you have learned what you know today?

2 As defined by Alberta Education's Framework for K-12 Wellness:

- Emotional wellness is acknowledging, understanding, managing and expressing thoughts and feelings in a constructive manner.
- Intellectual wellness is the development and the critical and creative use of the mind to its fullest potential.
- Physical wellness is the ability, motivation and confidence to move effectively and efficiently in a variety of situations, and the healthy growth, development, nutrition and care of the body.
- Social wellness is relating positively to others and is influenced by many factors including how individuals communicate, establish and maintain relationships, are treated by others and interpret that treatment.
- Spiritual wellness is an understanding of one's own values and beliefs leading to a sense of meaning or purpose and a relationship to the community.

3 For the purposes of this document, education is defined as the process by which society facilitates learning and nurtures individual passions, interests, and abilities.

4 Next Generation Economy is the Government of Alberta's way of describing what a knowledge-based economy will mean for the province, taking our economy to new levels of prosperity for generations to come. Source: www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/technology/actionplan/questions.aspx .

5 An inclusive learning environment is one where all students learn together, regardless of background or ability. It demonstrates universal acceptance of, and belonging for, all learners.

6 This document refers to two types of assessments: assessment of the learner and assessment of the broader education system. For learners, assessment is the ongoing process of collecting information, through formal and informal methods, to evaluate the performance of learners. Through assessment, programming can be tailored to better meet individual needs and abilities and to improve learning. Assessment of the broader education system often includes analysis of high school completion rates and enrolment in post-secondary education.

7 "Learning" is often defined as the act, process or experience of gaining knowledge or skill.

8 "Curriculum" is a set of provincially-approved courses and their content. In Alberta, the term curriculum also includes provincial assessment.

9 "Community" can include stakeholders and partners. While often referencing the local environment, it can be provincial, national and even global in scope. It shares a common interest, in this case the education of our children and youth.

10 "Experiential learning" is the process of making meaning from direct experience.

Photo Acknowledgements

The photos used in the report were selected from the top 28 photographs chosen by participants at the spring community conversations in 2009.

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10	Earth	® 1996 PhotoDisc, Inc. All rights reserved. Images provided by ® 1996 STOCKTREK.	© Photodisc/Getty Images
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* Photos are listed left to right on each page number

Appendix I
Steering Committee Members

Mark Anielski
Mark Anielski is an economist, professor of corporate social responsibility and author of *The Economics of Happiness: Building Genuine Wealth*, a best-selling, award-winning book released in 2007. Mark believes that we must move beyond the conventional model of economic growth towards a more genuine economy of wellbeing and enduring happiness. He believes one of the most important contributors to our genuine wealth is a vibrant and flourishing youth population and an education system that helps to build a society whose virtues include wisdom, courage, justice and the practice of moderation.

Manmeet Singh Bhullar, MLA Calgary - Montrose
Manmeet Singh Bhullar was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in 2008 and serves as the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. He was born in the Penbrooke neighborhood of his constituency and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from Athabasca University. Prior to becoming a Member of the Legislative Assembly, he worked as special assistant to the Honourable Jim Prentice, MP for Calgary Centre-North. An active member of his community, Manmeet founded Inspire, a youth development organization to empower young people and encourage them to participate in positive acts of community service. He also co-ordinated the Walking Hunger Away campaign which raised food and funds for the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank and led a team of volunteers that raised funds for the Calgary health region.

Lance Carlson
Lance Carlson is President and CEO of the Alberta College of Art and Design. He has taught at a variety of universities and colleges and holds graduate degrees in both cultural studies (sociology) and art and design. For years, he has published commentary and criticism, including attention to the field of design as a problem-solving method. His interest is in the redefinition of design and creative process as fields of inquiry and practice, especially how design can set the stage for organizational innovation and better educational outcomes. Lance is a frequent consultant to organizations and communities.

Sharon Carry
Sharon Carry is currently the President and CEO of Bow Valley College, and has devoted nearly four decades to a career at four Alberta post-secondary institutions rooted in her passion for creating educational opportunities for access and student success. She has also been the owner of a successful marketing and communications business and consulted for several private and public sector organizations. A fourth generation Calgarian, Sharon has completed three degrees at the University of Calgary – a Bachelor of Arts (political science), a Bachelor of Education (with distinction), and a Masters of Communications Studies. Her academic work has been enriched with diverse professional development experiences, including studies at Harvard, Oxford, Vanderbilt, and McGill universities. In the community, Sharon's interests include business, education, and social innovation, exemplified by her volunteer work with the Calgary Homelessness Foundation Board, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of Calgary, and the Mayor's Panel on Urban Sustainability (imagineCALGARY). She is also a member of the Rotary Club of Calgary.

Sharon Friesen
Dr. Sharon Friesen is a founding partner and president of the Galileo Educational Network and an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. She has devoted herself to conducting research and collaborating with administrators and teachers to develop research based practices. She is the recipient of numerous awards including: the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences 2007 Education Prize, the 2007 Calgary Stampede Legacy Award for Inno-

vation and the 1999 Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. She has co-authored three books, one which won the 2004 American Education Research Association Book Award for Curriculum Studies.

Jim Gibbons
Jim Gibbons has served in a variety of educational leadership positions from teacher, principal, deputy superintendent and superintendent. He has served, since 1997, as Superintendent of Schools for Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 (CESD), which encompasses rural Central Alberta from Carstairs north to Red Deer. He brings a rural perspective (Jim and his wife live on a ranch near Sundre), experience as a faculty member at two post-secondary institutions, current Chair of the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards and a member of the University of Calgary Senate.

Mary Hofstetter
Originally from Kitchener, Ontario, Mary Hofstetter holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English and Theatre Arts from the University of Guelph, and a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Western Ontario. She has also studied Technical Theatre Production and Art at The Banff Centre, French Language at the University of Neuchatel, and Civilization Française at the Sorbonne in Paris. Mary taught English and Art in England and at Neuchatel Junior College in Switzerland before returning to Canada to join the Ontario college system. In 1999, she was appointed executive vice-president and chief operating officer of The Banff Centre; acting president and CEO in 2000; and president and CEO in 2001.

Jeff Johnson,
Co-chair, MLA Athabasca-Redwater
Jeff Johnson was elected to his first term as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Athabasca-Redwater on March 3, 2008 and serves as the Parliamentary Assistant to Treasury Board. Sport and recreation have played an important role in Jeff's life as a hockey coach and trainer at the junior, college and pro levels. He has experience working in financial markets as a futures trading floor pit boss and as a salesperson for life insurance and related investment funds. For the last 11 years, he has owned and operated several small businesses. Prior to being elected, Jeff was the president and owner of Xpert Office Solutions, the largest rural Xerox Sales Agency in western Canada. He has a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Camrose Lutheran College (Augustana Faculty, U of A). Jeff is married and has three children.

Art Johnston,
MLA Calgary-Hays
Art Johnston was elected to his second term as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Calgary-Hays on March 3, 2008. Before being elected to Alberta's legislature, Art served 11 years with the Canadian Armed Forces, reaching the rank of sergeant before beginning a 25-year career serving with the Calgary Police Service. He retired as a patrol sergeant in 2003. Art is active both politically and within his community. He and his wife have four children.

Cheryl Knight
Cheryl Knight is the Executive Director and founding CEO of the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada, a national petroleum industry non-profit organization. Cheryl has over 20 years of multi-sector experience in strategic human capital development and stakeholder relations. She is widely recognized as an oil and gas industry expert and is a national spokesperson on strategic workforce and skills development issues. Cheryl has a Bachelor of Arts with Honors (Psychology) from the University of Calgary and a Masters of Education in Counseling from the University of Lethbridge.

Wilton Littlechild
Dr. Wilton Littlechild received his Law Degree from the University of Alberta in 1976. He was the first Treaty Indian in Alberta to graduate with a law degree and the first Treaty Indian elected to the Canadian Parliament. He also graduated in 1967 with a Bachelor of Physical Education and 1975 with a Master's Degree in Physical Education. As an athlete, he won more than 50 provincial, regional, national and international championships. As a coach and organizer of sports events, he was inducted into six Sports Walls of Fame. He was a founder of the North American Indigenous Games and is currently working on the World

Indigenous Nations (WIN) Games. At the international level, he organized a coalition of Indigenous Nations that sought and gained consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Recently, he was appointed as Games Ambassador for the 2010 Olympics.

Deborah Lloyd
Deborah Lloyd is employed with Medicine Hat School District #76 as the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Teacher/Consultant, a role she has been in for 21 years. Lloyd is a member of the Saddle Lake First Nation and grew up in central Alberta. She has lived in Medicine Hat for 35 years and is an active member of the whole community. Lloyd has a Bachelor of Education from the University of Lethbridge, majoring in Social Studies and specializing in Aboriginal Education. She has served as Co-chair on the Children's Services Board Region 2, served on the AADAC Commission board for a number of years, and was the last acting chair of the AADAC board. Lloyd has also served on the Medicine Hat Community Foundation Board and is currently a member of the Medicine Hat Food Band board. She is married, has 5 children, 21 grandchildren and four great-step-grandchildren.

John Masters
Since February 1998, John Masters has served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Calgary Technologies Inc. (CTI) – Calgary's economic development agency for the advanced technology sector. John and his son have lived in Calgary since 1987, where he is active on many community and provincial technology and research councils. John pursues an active lifestyle including a passion for downhill skiing, golfing, four-season mountain activities and spending time at his home-away-from-home in the Columbia Valley of British Columbia.

Brent McDonough, Co-chair
Brent McDonough is currently an International Baccalaureate (IB) Coordinator and Physics teacher at Holy Trinity High School, Edmonton Catholic Schools. He is a trustee and Vice-Chair of the Edmonton Public Library Board, Vice-President Alumni Engagement on the University of Alberta Alumni Association, and board member of the Mill Woods Multicultural Foundation. Brent is also a former member of the U of A Senate. He believes that education is fundamental to innovation and the building of a skilled workforce, and that education is the foundation of strong and vibrant communities.

Andy Neigel
Andy Neigel is President and CEO of CAREERS: The Next Generation and a member of the Northern Alberta Development Council. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry from the University of Alberta and a Forestry Diploma from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, and has provided successful leadership in the forest industry for more than 25 years. Andy is a Registered Professional Forester both in Alberta and in British Columbia, is a certified Forest Auditor, and is a graduate of the Queen's School of Business Executive and Leadership Programs. Andy, his wife and their four children live on a farm north of Edmonton.

Jane O'Dea
A native of Ireland, Dr. Jane O'Dea's first career was as a classical pianist and music teacher. Upon completion of her Ph.D. in philosophy of education at the University of Alberta, Jane joined the University of Lethbridge, where she is a Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Education. She believes that all children have the right to develop their diverse abilities and that schools, parents and communities must collaborate in support of that right. A passionate advocate of quality education, Jane sees education as the foundation of a meaningful life, the common good and a just society.

Brant Parker
Brant Parker is an educator passionate about supporting teachers to advance teaching practice and providing students with learning experiences that are consistent with the diverse, interdependent and rapidly changing digital world they live in. He has over 25 years experience teaching and leading innovation in both the K-12 education and technology sectors. Brant currently works with the Calgary Board of Education and is a former principal of University School, as well as Dr. Gordon Townsend School which operates out of the

Alberta Children's Hospital. He is also co-founder of School Soft Inc., an Alberta-based company which has developed a web-based solution for the scheduling of parent-teacher conferences.

Anne-Marie Pham

Anne-Marie Pham has strong ties to Calgary's ethno-cultural community and enjoys spearheading and supporting initiatives that address issues of community capacity building, ethno-cultural youth education and mentorship, community leadership, and the integration of ethno-cultural arts and culture into Canadian society. She has taken part in co-organizing many educational and cultural events in Calgary including youth leadership conferences, Asian Heritage Month, the Vietnamese Pavilion at Global Fest, and Refugee Day. Pham is cofounder of the Calgary Vietnamese Canadian Youth Group and is currently, the chair of the Vietnamese Canadian Youth Action Committee of the Vietnamese Canadian Federation. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Calgary, and a Masters degree in Public Administration from the University of Victoria.

Janice Sarich,
MLA Edmonton-Decore

Janice Sarich was elected to her first term as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Edmonton-Decore on March 3, 2008, and also serves as Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education. Prior to her election to the Legislative Assembly, Janice served as the Ward 2 school board trustee with Edmonton Catholic School District from 2001 to 2007. Before entering public service, Janice was president of her own business consulting company. Born and raised in Edmonton, Janice has a Bachelors degree in Physical Education and a Masters of Education degree from the University of Alberta. She also holds project management and project leadership certificates from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT). Janice is married and has two children.

Zuhy Sayeed

Zuhy Sayeed was born in Bombay, India and has lived in Lloydminster for the past 30 years. Zuhy is a trained teacher specializing in Early Childhood Education, married to a family physician and school board trustee. They are parents of four sons; two of them with special needs. After receiving advice that their second son should be 'placed in an institution' and 'forgotten about', they successfully challenged the school system to provide their son with an inclusive education; he is now a university graduate. Zuhy and her husband have ensured that their sons receive all the supports necessary for them to be successful young men and full and participating citizens.

Laurie Thompson

Laurie Thompson has been teaching for 17 years and has been an elementary school principal for four of those years. Laurie will bring a number of perspectives to the committee in a number of areas: rural Albertan; Métis Settlements; single parents; as an educator; advocate for special needs children and families; and children and families at risk. Laurie lives on the Kikino Métis Settlement with her 14 year old daughter; she has a B.Ed from the University of Alberta and a Masters of Arts in Leadership degree from Royal Roads University in Victoria.

John Tiemstra

John Tiemstra has 24 years of teaching experience in junior and senior high school settings in the Career and Technology Studies (CTS) Department teaching Building Construction and Welding. John holds a Bachelors of Education from the University of Alberta and a Carpentry certificate from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT). John believes that all children must be given equal opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.

Appendix II
Working Committee Members

Government		
Ministry	**Name**	**Position**
Education	Keray Henke (Chair)	Deputy Minister
Aboriginal Relations	Cameron Henry	Executive Director
Advanced Education and Technology	Lisa Fox	Director
Children and Youth Services	Mary Jane Graham	Director
Culture and Community Spirit	Andrew Neuman	Executive Director
Education, Inspiring Education	Bonnie Brooks	Project Executive Director
Education, Policy Development, Research and Coordination	Greg Rudolf	Director
Employment and Immigration	Mason Tate	Manager
Environment	Trina Innes	Senior Manager
Health and Wellness	Sherri Wilson	Senior Manager
Infrastructure	Jeff Paruk	Director
International and Intergovernmental Relations	David Williams	Associate Director
Justice and Attorney General	Danny Lynn	Crown Prosecutor
Municipal Affairs	Indira Breitkreuz	Executive Director
Service Alberta	Doug Morrison	Executive Director

Stakeholder Organizations		
Organization	**Name**	**Position**
Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA)	Stefan Michniewski	Executive Director
Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)	David Anderson	Executive Director
	Scott McCormack	Labour Relations Consultant
Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA)	Russell Horswill	President
Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA)	Michele Mulder	Executive Director
Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)	Dennis Theobald	Communications Coordinator
Association of Alberta Deans of Education	Mark Swanson	President
Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (AAPCS)	Judy Gray	Co-Chair
	Jay Pritchard	Co-Chair
Association of Independent Schools and Colleges of Alberta (AISCA)	Duane Plantinga	Executive Director
College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS)	Greg Woronuk	President, Assistant Superintendent
Fédération des conseils scolaires francophones de l'Alberta	Gérard Lavigne	Directeur
First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC)	Vivian Ayoungman	Executive Director
Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA)	David King	Executive Director

Appendix III
Hearing the Voice of Albertans

The importance of public engagement and listening to the voices of Albertans was essential to *Inspiring Education*. The Steering Committee was fundamentally committed to hearing the perspectives of all participants and to building on what was shared during all of these sessions.

A variety of processes offered Albertans a range of opportunities to be engaged in the dialogue. These included the:

- focused, "personal conversations" with small groups of individuals unlikely to attend larger sessions,
- spring Community Conversations held between April and June 2009,
- other online approaches included – blogs, Twitter, webcasting; YouTube; wikis; discussion forums; podcasts and other social media,
- online conversation kit to support locally-hosted community discussions, and
- provincial Forum in October 2009.

In addition to sharing their personal stories, during these sessions the public also had an opportunity to send an "I Message" ("I" for "Inspiring")to the Minister of Education or person of their choice. These messages were about their hopes and dreams for learning in the next 20 years. Participants in the spring sessions could also make a "Personal Commitment Statement".

The following quotes are taken directly from these processes. They show clearly how important this initiative has been in supporting the Minister's aim in launching *Inspiring Education* – to engage ALL Albertans in a dialogue about the importance of education.

To review more of the "I Messages" and "Commitment Statements" from across the province, visit www.inspiringeducation.alberta.ca.

Community Conversations - I Messages

To the Minister of Education - I hope that we can proudly say that we continued the journey we have started. That our students are global citizens with knowledge, critical thinking skills and wisdom grounded in a deep sense of social justice and responsibility. Edmonton, April 29

To my grandchildren - When I think of learning in 20 years, I hope you have the opportunity to enjoy learning through the arts; explore learning through math and science; represent learning through writing, speaking, and literature; but most of all, love learning through investigation and problem solving. Grande Prairie, May 6

To my two sons - When I think of learning in 20 years, I hope you haven't forgotten where you come from. I hope you have dreamed Big!! I hope you have invented and discovered what we thought of as impossible. I hope you have beaten and eliminated diseases that we deal with. I believe you will succeed because this generation now, desires to give you all the tools and opportunities you will need for your future. We believe in you!! Make us proud! Fort McMurray, May 13

To our young teachers - When I think of learning in 20 years, I hope you are as curious, as innovative, as welcoming and as compassionate as you are today. Lethbridge, May 20

A les élèves de la Province de l'Alberta- Lorsque je pense à l'apprentissage dans 20 ans, j'espère que tous apprenants pourront vivre un succès à l'école en plus d'une joie d'apprendre. Calgary, May 23

[To Alberta students – When I think of learning 20 years from now, I hope that all learners will be successful at school and experience the joy of learning.]

To an aspiring teacher - When I think of learning in 20 years, I hope children in your classes will learn to feel safe in expressing their opinions without fear of disrespect; boldness to join hands with others in solving collective problems; hope to initiate and carry out projects they could easily have considered impossible. Medicine Hat, May 27

To society in general - When I think of learning in twenty years, I hope that we continue to educate and develop the "whole" person. Basic skills and knowledge are important. Morals and ethics are even more important so that people are able to function and contribute to the society in which they live. Bonnyville, June 3

To the children of the less fortunate - When I think of learning in 20 years I hope when you want to speak you will be listened to. When you want to experience it the opportunity will be available. When you are scared you will be comforted. When you have a question you will be answered. When you suffer WE will help. Love your friends, the people of the world. Red Deer, June 10

I hope that the current student voice will be heard, listened to and valued for its unique wisdom. I hope there will be educators who are willing to give up their perspective of what is right and embrace youths' unseen dreams and desires for their future. I hope there will be mentors matched with each student to support them in their growth and their journey whatever that might be. Calgary, June 17

To the Minister of Education - When I think of learning in 20 years I hope that all children will have equal access to an education. That all children have the opportunity to learn the way they learn best and at the pace that fits best for them. (They need to be able to make mistakes). That all children have availability to the world's knowledge and creatively and innovatively apply their knowledge in their community. That all children are encouraged to learn about themselves in different environments. That we give children more than one chance. Edmonton, June 20

Community Conversations - Commitment Statements

I will continue to be a voice in the education process by participating on school council and attending meetings and seminars that affect education. I will continue assisting my children with their learning beyond what they get in the classroom. I will spread the word! Edmonton, April 29

Je donnerai mes opinions et mon encouragement à des rencontres formatives comme celle d'aujourd'hui. Je ferai mon possible d'être entendu dans mon domaine de travail qui vise au développement d'un futur meilleur pour nos jeunes, nos écoles commençant chez-nous, en famille. Je communiquerai mes connaissances, ma culture, mon multiculturalisme et le bilinguisme autour de moi. Merci. Grande Prairie, May 6

[I will share my opinions and provide encouragement at information meetings such as the one held today. I will endeavour to be heard in my workplace, saying that we must develop a better future for our youth and our schools and that this starts at home, in our families. I will communicate my knowledge, my culture, my multiculturalism and bilingualism in my milieu. Thank you.]

I will have conversations with staff, parents and community members about why changes are needed. I will support the teachers I work with during the change journey. Fort McMurray, May 13

I will try to inspire my students by/through enthusiasm and example. I will communicate my commitment, passion, and philosophy with parents and stakeholders. I will start with my own children by teaching them the values we have emphasized here today and challenging them to be involved. I will continue to be passionate and speak up about what I believe. Lethbridge, May 20

My action plan: Collaborate with administration to initiate creative project-based learning in interdisciplinary courses and incorporate youth's technology into learning. I will take and review models of inclusive/alternative education (as well as empowerment models for youth) and involve students to design programs and communicate. I will discuss with fellow education faculty students!! Calgary, May 23

In order to move forward with Inspiring Education, I will continue to be committed to elevating the position of Aboriginal people in our communities. I am convinced that by demonstrating respect for and by making society value FNMI elders and citizens, all of society will gain pride, peace and compassion. These qualities are necessary for students both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal and for community health and success. Medicine Hat, May 27

I will talk to our MLA, educators, parents, councils, volunteers and non-profit groups, and community organizations. Let them know that EDUCATION is our future, and we can change it one step at a time. Literacy and learning is key to our success with our children, adults, and population. We must teach one learner at a time. Never stop learning. It is our future. Bonnyville, June 3

I will provide responsible leadership and funding formulas to promote innovative learning experiences that engage students. Find ways to recognize and reward teachers who work every day to make education meaningful to the students. Keep good teachers teaching! Red Deer, June 10

I am committed to push for cross-ministry initiatives that support kids who are part of Children Services, Youth Justice, Aboriginal, Mental Health. I will push for infrastructure to give these kids at risk seamless support in their education. I will also continue to be the voice of our community members and always ask the question…is this good for students? Calgary, June 17

I will endeavour to continue this conversation in a variety of ways, utilizing social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, personal blog, etc. I will also continue to explore the use of emerging technologies, such as social media and virtual collaborative environments that may help bring some of the ideas discussed into reality. Edmonton, June 20

Personal Conversations - I messages

To: Minister Hancock Alberta Education - In 20 years, I hope that all children in Alberta will have unlimited access to a variety of experiences such as travelling and cultural exchanges that will promote acceptance of diversity in all its forms. These kinds of experiences will promote global citizenship and unity and a realization that we are all connected – to each other, and to the planet so everyone knows within themselves that looking after and caring for others is part of caring for ourselves.

In twenty years I want to learn in more personalized directed programs. I want to be able to learn about more practical things and have a more hands on learning experience rather than textbook learning.

To: Minister Hancock Alberta Education In twenty years I hope … that learning is not done by Education but by hands on and visual experience, by allowing all children to explore the world and experience their like and instead of having goals to become a doctor just to make money, rather become a doctor to save people lives because we love others.

To Minister Hancock - In 20 years I hope that every child has had the opportunity to explore their future occupational interests firsthand. I would hope they would be able to experience them through field trips to the community or abroad. I also hope that children will be able to learn more life skills in school to apply in life after school. Lastly I hope that children, especially in rural schools, have the opportunity to experience learning a second language and more creative and fine arts classes (music, art, photography) Thank you for listening.

To Minister David Hancock - In 20 Years I Hope … that schools are a place were (sic) the future students can go, and feel safe in a comforting environment. Most important gain life skills that they can use as they mature into young adults. In the further years they see education as an awesome experience personally.

To Mr. Dave Hancock

Dear Dave,

Thank you for listening. Thank you for trying to remember what (it) is like to be a child. Thank you for asking us when you can't remember.

In 20 years I hope that education isn't about grades. Grades judge us on external things – and don't take into account the darkness that is often on the inside. People always say that if you try hard enough you can achieve anything. But unfortunately that is not true. When I'm being abused, feeling alone, or if I have a physical or mental disability or don't have a safe place to go home to – I can't try very hard at the things that people measure. Please stop measuring as much. Please give me a chance even if I don't measure up. Thanks for listening Dave.

To: Minister David Hancock (spelling mistake in original)

In 20 years I hope … To see the good support within the schools in and out of school. Also for the school to be a safe place for everyone to go to.

(Smiley face) "Believe in me, when I'm to (sic) stupid to believe in myself."

Minister Dave Hancock - In twenty years I hope … That there is more than just hoping.

To Minister hancock (sic) Alberta Education

In 20 years I will be 37 and I hope that there will still be free education. I hope that bus passes will be more affordable to students, as well as school funds. Some of us are working low paying jobs and it would be easier to pay our student fees if they were a lot cheaper.

Yours truly

(Name)

(Picture of a Flower) Students are always in bloom Treat them with respect and be gentle with their sensitive minds.

Appendix IV
Summary of Conversations and Participants

16 Personal Conversations – 152 Participants

Date(s)	City	Audience
February 17, 2009	Edmonton	Youth at Risk
February 18, 2009	Calgary	Youth at Risk
March 2, 2009 AM	Calgary	Social Justice Agency
March 2, 2009 PM	Calgary	Youth at Risk
March 3, 2009 AM	Edmonton	Social Justice Agency
March 3, 2009 PM	Edmonton	Children in Care
March 12, 2009	Calgary	Young Offenders Centre
March 13, 2009 AM	Edmonton	Elizabeth Fry
March 13, 2009 PM	Edmonton	Children and Youth Services
March 23, 2009	Calgary	Immigrant Agencies
March 24, 2009	Edmonton	Edmonton Immigrant Community
April 4, 2009	Edmonton	Children and Youth Services Youth Committee
June 23, 2009	Edmonton	Aboriginal Youth
July 23, 2009	Edmonton	Africa Centre
August 18, 2009	Edmonton	Aboriginal Professional Women
September 10, 2009	Edmonton	Urban Aboriginal Elders

10 Community Conversations & 3 GOA Conversations – 1,100 Participants

Date(s)	City	Audience
April 8, 2009	Edmonton	Government of Alberta
April 15, 2009	Edmonton	Government of Alberta
April 29, 2009	Edmonton	Public
May 6, 2009	Grande Prairie	Public*
May 13, 2009	Fort McMurray	Public
May 20, 2009	Lethbridge	Public*
May 23, 2009	Calgary	Public*
May 27, 2009	Medicine Hat	Public
June 3, 2009	Bonnyville	Public*
June 10, 2009	Red Deer	Public
June 17, 2009	Calgary	Public
June 20, 2009	Edmonton	Public*
June 24, 2009	Edmonton	Alberta Education

* Indicates facilitation was available in French (upon request)

Community Conversation Kit

# of Downloads	# of Groups to Submit Data	# of Participants
1362	30	Approximately 1,000

Online Conversation

# of Activities	# of Participants
3	122

Provincial Forum*

# of In-person Participants	# of Online Participants	Total # of Participants
1072	361	1,433

* Same as above regarding the availability of French facilitation

Total Number of Participants

# of Activities	# of Participants
62	3,807

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